

Contra Costa County Water Agency et al.: Clifton Court Forebay Low Flow Fish Screens
(Log number Nov11 - 2)

Staff Recommendation: Include in Interim Plan.

Background

The applicant is requesting the Delta Stewardship Council (Council) to consider a study currently underway evaluating options and benefits of installing fish screens at Clifton Court Forebay to reduce fish salvage and predation losses, leading to reduced mortality of sensitive species and increase water supply reliability. The study is sponsored by several local public water agencies. The study is an extension of a previous technical analysis conducted by DWR (2009). The applicant has indicated that if the study results are positive and additional funding is located, design and environmental documentation could be completed and construction could begin construction by 2012.

This project, pending completion of engineering and environmental studies, would be consistent with many of the policy objectives in SBX7-1, including Section 85020 (a) to manage the Delta's water and environmental resources; and 85020 (c) to restore the Delta ecosystem, including its fisheries. In addition, it is consistent with Section 85085 (c) to move ahead with near term actions identified in the Delta Vision Strategic Plan as a Near-Term Action.

The applicants are following a sound scientific approach by studying options and working with the Delta Science Program to have the results evaluated by an independent external peer review panel. The application provides a reasonably good accounting of the science related to predation in Clifton Court Forebay and efforts to date to identify a viable screening alternative for the State Water Project in the southern Delta, although recent work by Castillo at the US Fish and Wildlife Service on prescreen smelt loss was not mentioned. The scope of the project, in terms of flow and design, has been narrowed but no final alternative has been identified. The criteria for an acceptable fish screening project at Clifton Court appear sound however the details of how these criteria would be applied is missing. The difficulty is likely to be with "far field effects". If the pumps would be operated under conditions that would increase the amount of pumping at the SWP pumps, there could be increased mortality of species of concern from causes not proximally linked to the pumps or screens. It isn't clear from the application, how these potential "far field effects" would be addressed.

Delta Stewardship Council Committee – Early Actions Review

Meeting Date: November 5th, 2010

Early Action Project or Plan Review: Staff Recommendation

The proposed study is appropriate to include in the Interim Plan as an Early Action. A proposed fish screen project resulting from the study will require further scientific evaluation, engineering studies and designs, and related environmental documentation and permits, and may be considered in the future for consistency with the Delta Plan.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1 – Early Action Summary Form

Attachment 2 – Application for Consideration of a Plan or Project

Contact

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